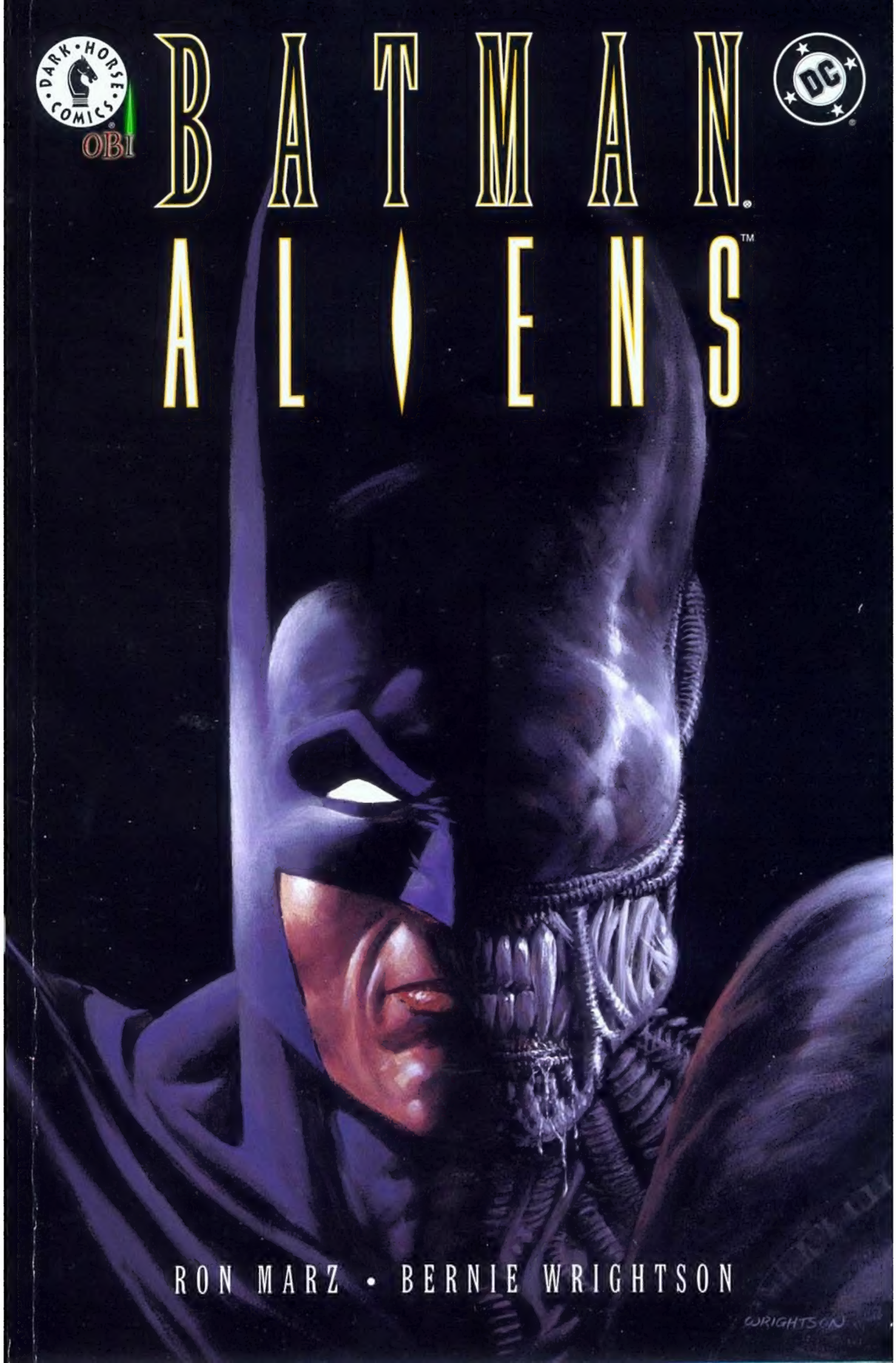
DARK HORSE COMICS
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BATMAN
DC
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WRIGHTSON

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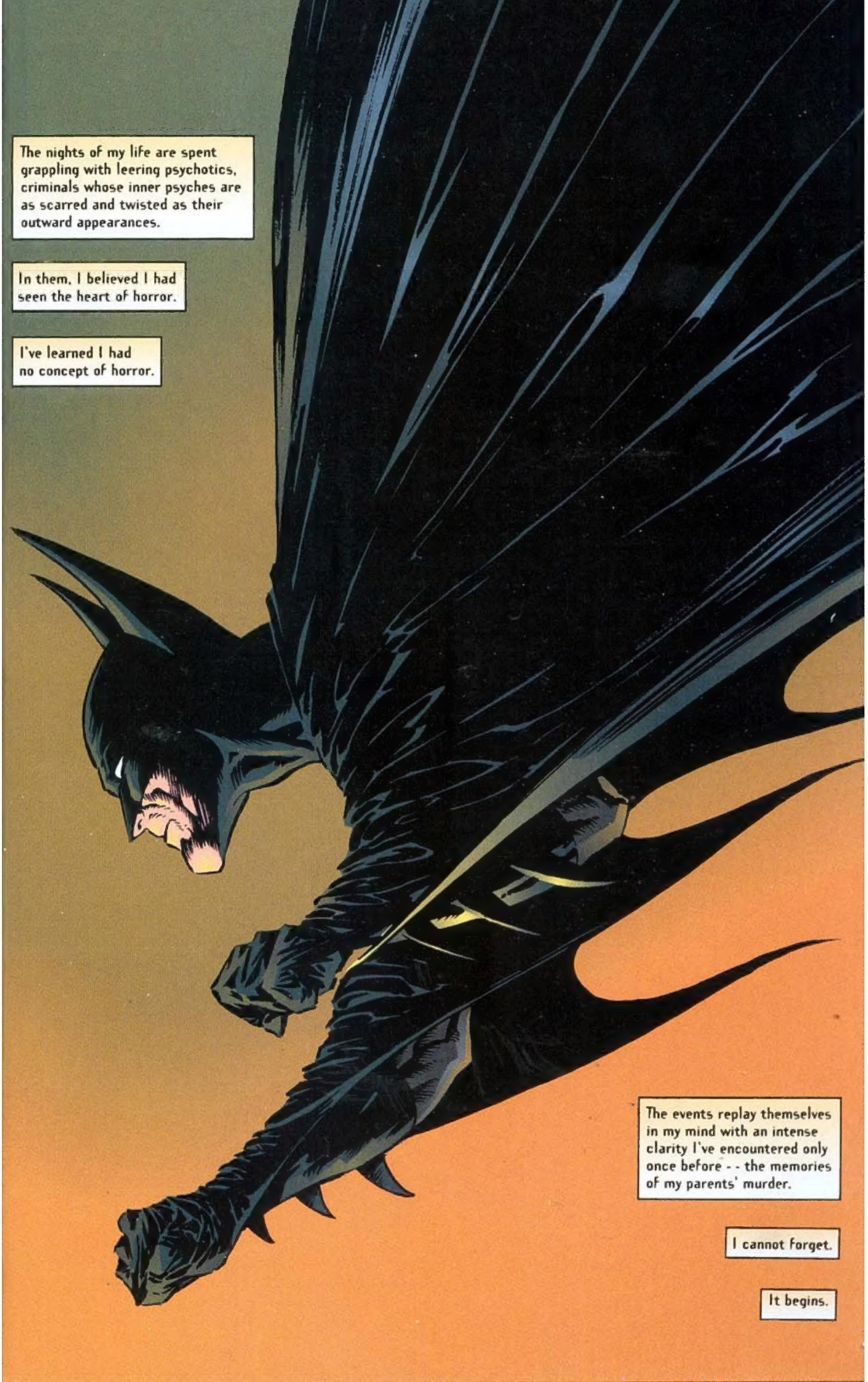
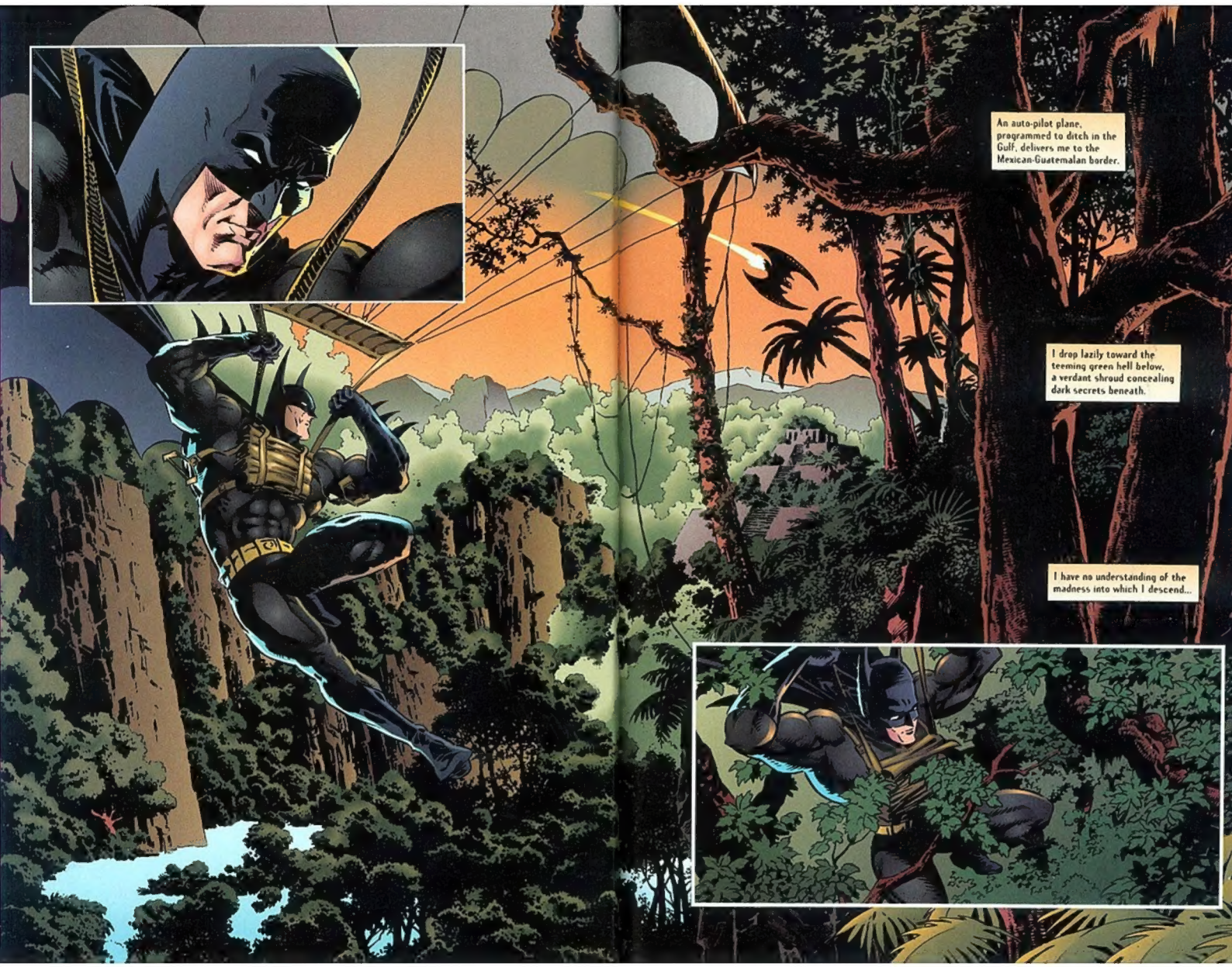
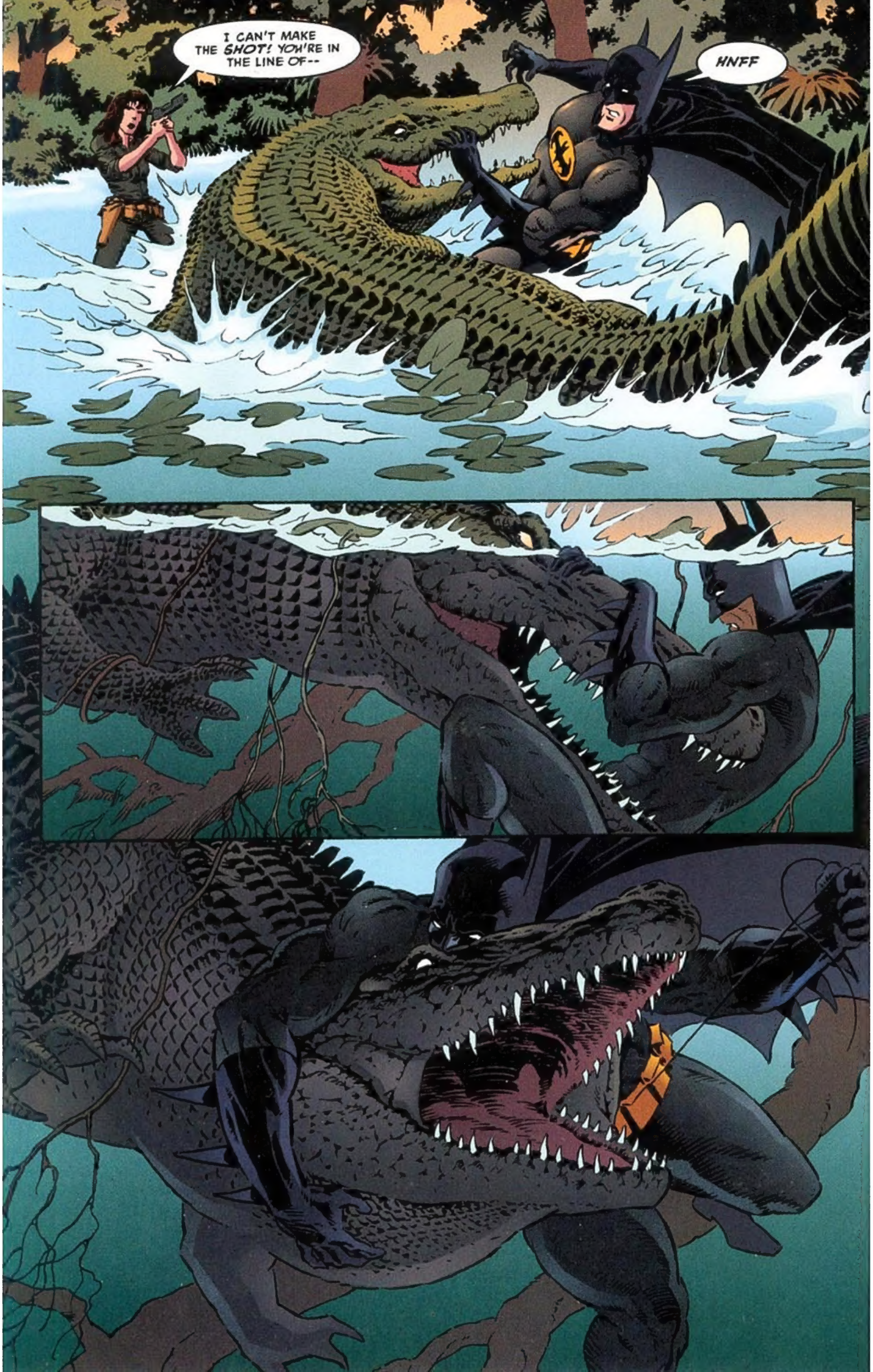

The nights of my life are spent grappling with leering psychotics, criminals whose inner psyches are as scarred and twisted as their outward appearances.
In them, I believed I had seen the heart of horror.
I've learned I had no concept of horror.
The events replay themselves in my mind with an intense clarity I've encountered only once before - - the memories of my parents' murder.
I cannot forget.
It begins.


An auto-pilot plane, programmed to ditch in the Gulf, delivers me to the Mexican-Guatemalan border.
I drop lazily toward the teeming green hell below, a verdant shroud concealing dark secrets beneath.
I have no understanding of the madness into which I descend...

SPAASH
GUHN

HELL OF AN ENTRANCE...
... FOR SOMEBODY WHO WASN'T INVITED.
Hn?
WHO... ARE YOU?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN--
DON'T MOVE.
KCHOW
SPISH


I CAN'T MAKE THE SHOT! YOU'RE IN THE LINE OF--
HNFF

MAN.
I FIGURED I'D HAVE TO PAY MONEY TO SEE A CROCODILE THAT BIG AND SOME DAMN FOOL WRESTLING IT.
NOW WHY DON'T YOU GET OUTTA THE WAY...

... SO I CAN MAKE SURE THAT THING'S NOT GONNA TAKE A CHUNK OUTTA ME LATER.
MOVE, BEFORE YOU GET YOURSELF SHOT.
I'M SERIOUS.
SO AM I.
DON'T PULL THAT TRIGGER.
THE CROC WAS ONLY FOLLOWING ITS NATURE. IT NEVER KILLS...
...JUST FOR PLEASURE.
YEAH, THANKS. I'LL KEEP THAT IN MIND...
...WHEN I'M WEARING IT AS BOOTS.
KLIK-KLATCH
FWPP
WHERE'S...?

I SAID DON'T.
EASY, VAN, FINGER OFF THE TRIGGER.
YOU GOT A DEATH WISH, MAN? WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE, DOING SOMETH--
DON'T MAKE ME TAKE IT AWAY FROM YOU AGAIN.
NOW.
I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE OR WHY YOU'RE HERE, BUT I HAVE A JOB TO DO. I WON'T HAVE YOU IN THE WAY.
SO YOU'RE LEAVING.
Hh... CAPTAIN?
SEALEY?
HA HA HA HA

I THINK MAYBE YOU MUST BE CONFUSED.
ONLY MISSION 'ROUND HERE IS THE ONE WE'RE ON. GOVERNMENT SORT OF THING. YOU'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF A RESTRICTED AREA, MILITARY LAW IMPOSED. SO WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT...
...YOU'RE DOING THE LEAVING, ONE WAY OR THE OTHER.
AM I MAKING MYSELF CLEAR?
I AM ON A MISSION OF MERCY.
I HAVE ONE PARTNER, AND I LEFT HIM AT HOME. ANYONE ELSE'S PRESENCE IS INTERFERENCE. I WON'T TOLERATE IT.
AM I MAKING MYSELF CLEAR?
YOU'RE IN THE WRONG PLACE, MAN. YOU'RE OUT OF YOUR ELEMENT.
PEOPLE WHO POINT GUNS AT ME COME TO REGRET IT.

PLAY NICE, KIDS.
AND FOR PITY'S SAKE, SEALEY, QUIT WAVING THIS THING AROUND. THE OP'S ENOUGH OF A SNAFU AS IT IS. WE DON'T NEED YOU ADDING TO IT.
REMIND ME WHEN I ASKED FOR YOUR OPINION, HYATT. LAST TIME I CHECKED, I WAS IN CHARGE OF THE MISSION.
YEAH? THEN YOUR MISSION'S BEEN ON THE GROUND FOR THIRTY MINUTES AND IT'S ALREADY A DISASTER.
ALL OUR GEAR'S SOMEWHERE ON THE BOTTOM OF THAT SWAMP. WE NEED WHATEVER HELP WE CAN GET.
UNLESS THIS GUY'S DRESSED UP FOR HALLOWEEN, I'D SAY IT'S A SAFE BET HE CAN TAKE CARE OF HIMSELF.
ALL RIGHT.
WE CAN TRY IT YOUR WAY.
BUT YOU HEARD THE MAN. SAID HE WORKS ALONE.
LOOK, LIKE IT OR NOT, WE'RE STUCK WITH EACH OTHER.
OUR TEAM'S ON A COVERT OP. WE DON'T ALLOW CIVILIANS TO KNOW ABOUT MISSIONS LIKE THIS, MUCH LESS STUMBLE INTO THE MIDDLE OF THEM.
PROTOCOL SAYS NEUTRALIZE YOU, BUT CIRCUMSTANCES BEING WHAT THEY ARE, WE COULD USE THE EXTRA BODY.
OUR TARGET SITE'S NORTHEAST.
SO'S MINE.
SEEMS LIKE WE'D JUST BE GETTING IN EACH OTHER'S WAY THEN, WOULDN'T WE?
MY NAME'S HYATT. YOU'RE...?
JUST WHO YOU THINK I AM.
ALL RIGHT... BATMAN. DO WE HAVE A WORKING RELATIONSHIP?
YOU ASK AS IF THERE'S ANY REAL CHOICE. I'LL ALLOW YOU TO ACCOMPANY ME...
...AS LONG AS YOU STAY OUT OF MY WAY.

I THINK WE CAN *LIVE* WITH THAT ARRANGEMENT.
MIGHT AS WELL GET TO KNOW THE *REST*. THIS IS THE *DEAD-MAN'S HAND*, GOVERNMENT SPECIAL FORCES.
EXACTLY WHO WE WORK FOR ISN'T YOUR CONCERN.
THAT'S *PAGE*...
... GANTRY...
... VAN DERPOOL, CALL HIM *VAN*...
... AND YOU'VE *ALREADY* HAD THE PLEASURE OF MEETING *CAPTAIN SEALEY*.
Uh-huh.

WE WERE SENT HERE TO FIND... SOMETHING.
BUT RECON AND INTEL WENT TO SLEEP ON US. WE 'CHUTED IN BLIND AND HIT THE SWAMP. ALL OUR GEAR--
--RADIO EQUIPMENT, MOST OF OUR WEAPONS AND AMMO, RATIONS--
--SANK BEFORE WE COULD GET TO IT.
WHAT ABOUT YOU? YOUR GEAR COME DOWN SOMEWHERE AROUND HERE?
I'M CARRYING EVERYTHING I NEED.
RIGHT, RIGHT, SOCIAL TIME'S OVER.
WE GOT AT LEAST FIVE KLICKS TO COVER THROUGH HEAVY JUNGLE, AND WE'RE LOSING LIGHT.
LET'S MOVE.
AFTER YOU, HERO.
NO.
I WANT YOU IN FRONT OF ME...
... WHERE I CAN SEE YOU.
YEAH, THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT TO DO...

"... WORK YOURSELF ONTO MY BAD SIDE."
CRIPES.
SUN'S DOWN AND IT'S STILL 95 DEGREES. I HATE THE HEAT. SEEMS LIKE MOST OF OUR MISSIONS DROP IN THE JUNGLE OR THE MIDDLE OF SOME DESERT.
GUESS YOU'RE PROBABLY NOT USED TO THIS, YOU STAYING AROUND GOTHAM MOSTLY.
HOW MUCH FARTHER, CAPTAIN?
I LOOK LIKE A MAP TO YOU, GANTRY?
HELLO? ARE YOU EVEN LISTENING TO ME? I SAID--
I HEARD YOU.
I HAVE NOTHING TO--
YOU.
YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE YOU'RE SWEATING. YOU GO WALK POINT FOR A WHILE.
I DON'T TAKE ORDERS.
AND I WON'T STAND FOR DISOBEDIENCE IN MY UNIT. I DEAL WITH ANY PROBLEMS MYSELF.
LOOKS TO ME LIKE YOU GOT PROBLEM WRITTEN ALL OVER YOU.
THEN MAYBE YOU SHOULD TRY DEALING WITH ME, SO WE CAN GET IT OVER WITH.
IS THAT AN ORDER?
DAMN RIGHT IT IS.

HWF
GHN!
KLUD
KRSSSH
PAGE?
PAGE, GET UP HERE. POP A FLARE. GIMME SOME LIGHT.
HUMF
RIGHT HERE. GOT IT, CAP.

IT'S HERE. AN HONEST-TO-GOODNESS SPACECRAFT...
...OR WHAT'S LEFT OF ONE.
IT'S HUGE.
DO YOU SEE THIS THING? IT'S JUST SO HUGE.
WONDERS NEVER CEASE. SATELLITE TRACKING FINALLY GOT ONE RIGHT!
GOD'S MERCY ON US ALL.

SEEMS LIKE WE FOUND WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR.
THIS ISN'T WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR.
IT ISN'T? THEN WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING DOWN HERE?
HUH?
NOT ONE OF OURS, SEALEY. NOT RUSSIAN, EITHER, AND NOBODY ELSE HAS THE TECH TO EVEN GET SOMETHING LIKE THIS INTO ORBIT.
DOESN'T LEAVE TOO MANY OTHER OPTIONS. IT'S GOT TO BE THE REAL DEAL, IT'S FROM OUT THERE.
HEY, PAGE?
WHAT DO YOU THINK? YOU THINK THERE'S ANYTHING ALIVE IN THERE?
I THINK YOU SHOULD SWITCH TO DECAF, VAN.
DAMN.
AN ALIEN SPACESHIP AND BATMAN, ALL IN THE SAME DAY.
OKAY, BOYS AND GIRLS. LET'S HAVE US A LITTLE LOOK AROUND AND SEE IF ANYBODY'S HOME.
PAGE, WITH ME. VAN AND GANTRY, THAT WAY.
HYATT, YOU AND YOUR BOYFRIEND UP THERE.

IF ANYBODY FINDS ANYTHING, YELL. RENDEZVOUS BACK HERE IN FIFTEEN.
SEE SOMETHING YOU DON'T LIKE, SHOOT IT.
I HEARD THAT.
HEY, I DON'T KNOW IF YOU THINK YOU'RE BEING CHIVALROUS OR WHAT, BUT I DO HAVE A GUN.
WHY DON'T YOU LET ME TAKE POINT?
TERRIFIC.
LOOK, ALL I'M TRYING TO DO IS MAKE CONVERSATION, NOT REALLY THE TALKATIVE TYPE, ARE YOU?
NO.
WE'RE WALKING AROUND INSIDE A SPACE-SHIP-- AN ALIEN SPACE-SHIP FROM GOD KNOWS WHERE-- AND YOU DON'T HAVE A THING TO SAY?
NOTHING?
I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS. YOU ACT LIKE IT'S NO BIG DEAL TO--
KCHOW
EYAAA!
THAT'S VAN!

AW, JEEZ, MAN, IT'S REAL -- IT'S REAL, AND IT AIN'T HUMAN. FREAKING ALIEN.
THE HEAD. THE HEAD'S ALL WRONG.
DID YOH KILL IT?
JUST HANGING THERE, MAN, LIKE SOME KIND OF--
VAN DERPOOL!
DID YOH KILL IT?
... THOUGH I WALK THROUGH THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH...
I... NO.
NO WAY. THAT THING WAS DEAD WHEN I FOUND IT. I JUST...
... IT STARTLED ME, OKAY? I SHOT IT, BUT IT WAS ALREADY DEAD, I SWEAR.
... I WILL FEAR NO EVIL...
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOH SCREAMING ABOUT, VAN?! SOUNDS LIKE A GIRLS' DORMITORY ON PANTY-RAID NIGHT IN HERE!
... FOR THOH ART WITH ME...

ME AND GANTRY, RIGHT? WE COME AROUND THE CORNER AND I CAUGHT SIGHT OF IT FIRST.
I GOT RATTLED, THAT THING LOOMING UP THERE IN THE DARK. SO I, HM, PUT ONE IN ITS HEAD.
AND THAT HOLE IN ITS CHEST?
WASN'T ME. THAT WAS THERE.
... THY ROD AND THY STAFF COMFORT ME...
WHAT COULD DO THAT, SEALEY, THAT HOLE? YOU DON'T... YOU DON'T THINK IT WAS ALIVE WHEN IT HAPPENED, DO YOU?
WHO AM I? DR. SPOCK? HOW SHOULD I KNOW?!
MISTER.
... THOU SHALT PREPARE A TABLE BEFORE ME AGAINST THEM THAT TROUBLE ME...
WHAT?
YOU MEAN MISTER SPOCK. HE WAS THE GUY ON "STAR TREK."
CHECK IT OUT, HYATT.
... THOU HAST ANOINTED MY HEAD WITH OIL, AND MY CUP SHALL BE FULL...
DOCTOR SPOCK WAS THE BABY GUY.
UGLY LITTLE GEEK, ISN'T HE, PAGE?
YEAH, I CARE, VAN. SHUT UP!
START BAGGING AND TAGGING. UNCLE SAM'S GONNA WANT EVERYTHING. WE CAN PICK IT UP--
... BUT THY LOVING KINDNESS AND MERCY SHALL FOLLOW ME...
... ALL THE DAYS OF MY LIFE. AND I WILL DWELL IN THE--
YOU WOULD BE TOO WITH YOUR CHEST BLOWN OUT AND A HOLE IN YOUR HEAD.
GANTRY!
SHUT YER YAP! CAN'T EVEN HEAR MYSELF THINK WITH YOU BABBLING THAT BIBLE CRAP!
WHAT DO YOU SAY, MISTER DETECTIVE? WHAT'RE WE LOOKING AT HERE?
I'M SURPRISED YOU WANT MY OPINION, SEALEY.
YEAH, WELL, ANY PORT IN A STORM, RIGHT?

SO... WHAT KILLED THE LITTLE GHY? AND WHAT'S THAT GHNK HE'S ALL STRUNG UP WITH?
I'M NOT SURE JUST YET. WE NEED TO SEARCH THE REST OF THE SHIP, COLLECT MORE EVIDENCE.
MAYBE THEN I CAN GIVE YOU A THEORY.
THANKS, THAT'S REALLY ENLIGHTENING.
SEARCH THE REST OF THE SHIP. WOULDN'T HAVE THOUGHT OF THAT ALL BY MYSELF.

ALL RIGHT, WE FINE-TOOTH THIS PLACE, SAME PAIRS AS BEFORE. FIND EVERYTHING THAT'S HERE.
AND VAN? DON'T SHOOT SOMETHING UNLESS IT'S ALIVE.
MEET BACK AT THE HULL BREACH IN--
SEALEY...
...I DO THINK WE SHOULD BE CAREFUL.

HRROWLL
BLAM BLAM
DAMN IT...
...KEEP MISSING.
GOOD IDEA, PAGE. MOST OF OUR AMMO ENDED UP ON THE BOTTOM OF THE SWAMP, SO WHY NOT WASTE WHAT LITTLE WE'VE GOT LEFT.
PLEASE, I'M TRYING TO READ.
CAN'T STAND THOSE THINGS. ALL THAT HOWLING GIVES ME THE CREEPS.
I'M GONNA FIND THAT THING AND KILL IT.
...AND YOU GET FREAKED OUT BY MONKEYS. YOU'RE ONE OF A KIND, PAGE, TRULY.
...TWO WITH THEIR CHESTS EXPLODED...
WE'RE CAMPED NEXT TO A DOWNED SPACESHIP, INSIDE OF WHICH WE FIND FIVE ALIEN BODIES...
YOU DO THAT, GREAT WHITE HUNTER. PUT THAT GUN TO USE.

IDIOT.
HOW 'BOUT YOU? YOU REALLY GET BY WITH JUST YOUR FISTS, LIKE THEY SAY?
WHY DON'T YOU CARRY A GUN?
I HAVE MY REASONS.
WHAT ABOUT YOU? WHY DO YOU CARRY A GUN?
I'M THE FIRST AND ONLY WOMAN ON ANY U.S. COVERT OPS TEAM. I DO IT BECAUSE IT'S THE SORT OF THING THAT GETS YOU NOTICED, MOVES YOU UP THE LADDER.
I'M GOING TO BE A WOMAN WITH POWER SOMEDAY. I'VE WANTED THAT EVER SINCE I WAS A LITTLE GIRL. I'LL DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO GET ME THERE.
I GUESS WE ALL HAVE OUR LITTLE OBSESSIONS, DON'T WE?
YOU'RE ASKING WHY I DO THIS?
AMBITION.

SO WHAT OBSESSION BROUGHT YOU DOWN HERE? THOUGHT YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO BE THE URBAN CREATURE OF THE NIGHT AND ALL THAT?
IF YOU'RE NOT HERE FOR THAT SHIP, THEN WHAT?
I TOLD YOU, I'M ON A MISSION OF MERCY. AND I'VE DELAYED MY SEARCH LONG ENOU--
HRROWL
BLAM BLAM
PAGE.
I GET MY HANDS ON HIM, WE'RE GONNA COME BACK FROM THIS MISSION WITH ONE LESS--
EYAAGH!

WHERE?! WHERE'D IT COME FROM?
I DUNNO! HYATT, YOU SEE ANYTHING? SEALEY?
FOLLOW ME! I THINK HE'S...
...OVER HERE.
IS...
...IS IT...?
BLOOD.
MORE THAN LIKELY HUMAN. MORE THAN LIKELY PAGE'S.
HIS GUN'S OVER THERE IN THE UNDERGROWTH. I HAVE TO ASSUME HE WAS CARRIED AWAY...
... BECAUSE HIS TRACKS WERE JOINED BY... SOMETHING ELSE... BEFORE THEY STOPPED. LIKE NOTHING I'VE ENCOUNTERED BEFORE.
THIS WAY.
GREAT. SOMETHING HE HASN'T ENCOUNTERED BEFORE.

HERE.
THE TRAIL LEADS INTO THE INTERIOR OF THE CENTRAL TEMPLE, PROBABLY DEEPER INTO THE UNDERGROUND COMPLEX.
I'LL GO IN AFTER PAGE.
ALL BY YOURSELF WHILE THE REST OF US SIT AROUND OUT HERE? I DON'T THINK SO.
DEAD-MAN'S HAND TAKES CARE OF ITS OWN. HE'S MY MAN, I'M GOING IN AFTER HIM.
YOU SAW THE CONDITION OF THOSE ALIENS ON THE SHIP. YOU HAVE NO WAY OF KNOWING WHAT'S IN HERE.
I'M BETTER EQUIPPED TO DEAL WITH THE UNKNOWN.
GOT ALL THE EQUIPMENT I NEED RIGHT HERE.
I'M ON POINT. THE REST OF YOU BEHIND--

SKWEEE
SKWEEE
DOWN!
AHH!
GET 'EM OFF!
OH, MAN.
IF YOU INTEND TO GO WITH ME...

"... I SUGGEST WE GET MOVING..."
HOW DEEP IS THIS PLACE, HUH? WE'VE BEEN DOWN HERE TOO LONG. WE SHOULD'VE FOUND PAGE BY NOW.
EASE UP, VAN.
THIS ISN'T COOL. THIS ISN'T WHAT I SIGNED UP FOR, WANDERING AROUND MAYAN RUINS IN THE DARK. WE COULD BE HEADED IN THE WRONG DIRECTION.
HOW DO WE KNOW BATMAN'S NOT LOST?
I HAVEN'T LOST THE SPOOR.
THERE'S AN ODOR.
I DON'T SMELL ANYTHING.
NO, HE'S RIGHT. THERE IS A SMELL.
UP AHEAD, 'ROUND THE CORNER.
I'M ON IT. I'M...
...lord ...god...

IT'S NOT PAGE.
LOOK AT HIS CHEST.
MERCIFUL GOD.
IT'S NOT PAGE!
NOPE.
BUT WHO THE HELL IS IT?
HIS NAME WAS ABEL BARRETT.
HE'S A GEOLOGIST WORKING FOR WAYNE TECH, SENT DOWN HERE TO SURVEY FOR COPPER DEPOSITS.
CONTACT WAS LOST WITH HIM FOUR DAYS AGO. BRUCE WAYNE ASKED ME TO LOCATE BARRETT.

HE HAD A WIFE AND DAUGHTER.
SO WHAT'S THE DEAL? WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM?
OBVIOUSLY, THE EVIDENCE HERE IS EXACTLY THE SAME AS ON THE SHIP. WHATEVER DID THIS WAS ON THE SHIP...
...PROBABLY CAME HERE WITH THE SHIP. I HAVE TO SUSPECT WE'RE NOT ALONE IN THIS RUIN COMPLEX.
THEN WE GOT SOME SERIOUSLY TWISTED PEOPLE FOR COMPANY DOWN HERE.
WHY DO YOU ASSUME WE'RE DEALING WITH PEOPLE?
WE DON'T NEED ANY SECRETS, BATMAN. WHAT DO YOU KNOW?
NOTHING YET. BUT I THINK WE SHOULD FIND PAGE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
AND I THINK WE SHOULD BE PREPARED FOR ANYTHING.
MOVE YOUR BUTT, HYATT, WE'RE LEAVING.
COMING.

SO THERE'S SOMETHING ON THE LOOSE IN HERE WITH US. SOMETHING THAT CAME OUT OF THAT SPACESHIP. THAT'S WHAT BATMAN SAID, ISN'T IT?
THIS IS BAD. WE'RE IN TROUBLE, MAN, I CAN FEEL IT.
THOSE WHO TRUST IN THE LORD NEED NOT FEAR. FAITH IN THE ALMIGHTY GOD IS OUR ROAD TO SALVATION.
IT SAYS IN THE BOOK OF PRAYERS, "OUR HELP IS IN THE NAME OF THE LORD, WHO HATH MADE HEAVEN AND--"
FOR PITY'S SAKE, GANTRY, GIVE IT A REST!
UNLESS YOUR GOD'S GONNA STRAP ON AN ASSAULT RIFLE AND BAIL US OUT OF HERE, I DON'T SEE HIM AS BEING MUCH HELP! SO I DON'T WANNA HEAR...
... IT.
VAN DER...
... POOL...

PAGE!
... THEY CAME FOR ME... THINGS...
... LIKE YOU CAN'T IMAGINE... ALL TEETH AND...
... TEETH AND TEETH AND TEETH...
IT'S A MIRACLE.
GOD HAS SPARED HIM.
TAKE IT EASY, PAGE. YOU'RE OKAY.
... NUH-NO... NONE OF US...
... YOU DON'T KNOW... WHAT'S HERE ... THINGS...
THERE'S AN EGG.
IT'S HATCHED...

BLAM
HKK
HAD TO BE DONE.
MURDERER!
HE WAS DEAD ALREADY!

... JUST LIKE THE OTHERS.
WELL, WHAT'S THAT MEAN? "LIKE THE OTHERS"?
IS THERE SOMETHING WRONG WITH PAGE? THERE IS, ISN'T THERE?!
THINGS...
ASK FOR HIS HELP, PAGE. PRAY WITH ME.
... DIDN'T KILL ME... THEY DIDN'T...
...puh- put me here and brought... that... the egg...
...OPENED... JUST LIKE A... FLOWER...
... HANDS ON ME... ON MY FACE...
PRAY WITH--
GET OUT OF THE WAY.
... DOWN MY THROAT...
AW, MAN, IT'S GONNA HAPPEN TO HIM, THAT CHEST THING! JUST LIKE THE SCIENTIST GUY AND THE TWO GEEKS ON THE SHIP!
WHAT ARE WE GONNA DO?! WE GOTTA LEAVE!
SHUT UP, VAN! SHUT IT!
CAN YOU BREATHE PROPERLY? IS THERE A BLOCKAGE?
... IT LEFT SOMETHING... ALIVE... INSIDE ME...
CALM DOWN! EVERYBODY!
CALM DOWN AND QUIET DOWN!
... I CAN FEEL IT...
...MOVING...
I'M TAKING YOU OUT OF--

CRIPES, HE'S STRONG.
LET...
STOP IT! BOTH OF YOU!
WHAT'S DONE IS DONE. WE'VE GOT ENOUGH PROBLEMS WITHOUT FIGHTING EACH OTHER.
... GO!
YOU KILLED THAT MAN IN COLD BLOOD, SEALEY.
NOT THE FIRST TIME.
PAGE WAS A CASUALTY THE MINUTE THAT THING GOT INSIDE HIM. I KNOW IT AND SO DO YOU. I'M JUST THE ONE WHO ADMITTED IT.
I SAID WE TAKE CARE OF OUR OWN. WHAT THAT MEANS NOW IS WE SAVE OURSELVES.
WE'RE GETTING OUT OF HERE, AND WE'LL DO IT FASTER WITHOUT CARRYING BAGGAGE LIKE PAGE.
YOU DON'T NEED TO BE A DETECTIVE TO FIGURE OUT SOMETHING'S DOWN HERE WITH US.
I WANT TO BE GONE BEFORE IT FINDS US.

HSSS
HSSS
HHSSSSS
HGAAH!
BLAM
BLAM

MONSTERS--
SEALEY!
SHOOT IT! SHOOT!
YAAH!
BLAM
SKREEEEE
WHAT THE HELL?! Oh, GOD, WHAT ARE THEY?!
MY FACE!
CAP!
SEALEY'S DOWN! SOMEBODY GET TO HIM!
BACK TO BACK!
DON'T PANIC! NO CROSSFIRES!
BLAM BLAM
CAN'T SEE THEM! MOVING TOO FAST!
HOW MANY?!
ah...
HHSSSSS

...HNN!
FWPP
YOUR BACK, VAN! GET DOWN!
...FACE'S BURNING...
MOVE!
I WON'T BE ABLE TO HOLD IT!
AHHH
ONLY HAVE TO TELL ME ONCE.
I'M LOW! WHO'S CARRYING?!
STILL CAN'T FREAKIN' SEE!
DEMONS FROM THE PIT...
GANTRY? GANTRY, WHERE THE HELL'D YOU GO?

HSSS
BRAA
BRAA
KA-KLIK
KA-KLIK
NEARER MY GOD...
...TO THEE...
RUTTCH

SKREEE
BRAAP BRAAP
DROP!
WHY DON'T YOU DROP, YOU FREAKIN' BUG!
GAAHH!
HERE!
HSSSSS
WHERE'S MY GUN, HYATT? GET ME MY GUN...
YOU WANT A MEAL, TRY ME!

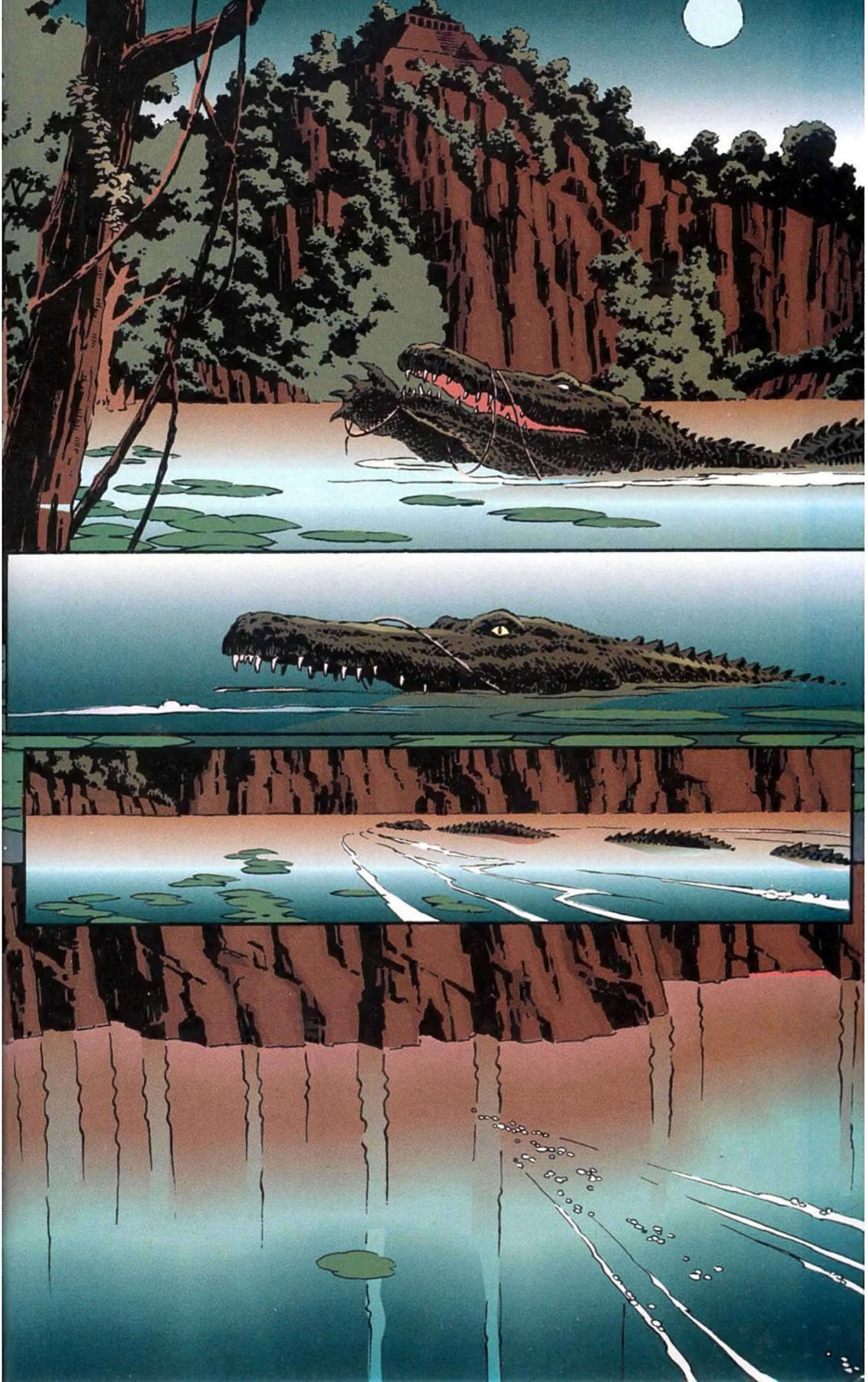
SO FAST...
...HNF!
HHSSS

COME ON!
BRAAP
BRAAP
GET SOME! GET SOME!
ALL THREE OF YOU UGLY MOTHERS!
HSSSS
BRAAK BRAAAP
UNFF!
BRAAP
AGHH!
SEALEY!
TAKE AT LEAST...
...ONE OF YOU BASTARDS...
...WITH ME...
HHSSSSS

KLIK
WHOOM

HYATT? VAN DERPOOL?
ARE YOU BOTH ALL RIGHT?
ALIVE, THANKS TO YOU SHIELDING US.
MY ARM.
I CAN'T FEEL MY ARM.

BATTERIES ARE FAILING.
HOLD STILL.
BUT IT HURTS, BURNS LIKE--
HOLD STILL. I CARRY FIRST AID IN MY BELT.
HYATT? HOW BAD OFF ARE WE, HUH?
YOU ASKING ME TO FIND A SILVER LINING, VAN? TAKE A LOOK AROUND.
SEALEY AND GANTRY ARE DEAD. SEALEY SNUFFED ONE OF THOSE THINGS, BUT THE OTHER TWO ARE STILL OUT THERE SOMEWHERE.
THE EXPLOSION SEALED OFF THE CORRIDOR, SO AT LEAST THEY CAN'T GET IN HERE WITH US.
FOR NOW.
THE COLLAPSE ALSO CUTS OFF OUR ESCAPE ROUTE BACK TO THE SURFACE.
OUR SUPPLIES ARE NIL, AND VAN DERPOOL IS GOING TO NEED MORE COMPLETE MEDICAL ATTENTION THAN I CAN GIVE.
THOSE CREATURES HAVE BEEN IN THE RUIN COMPLEX FOR DAYS AT THE VERY MINIMUM. THEY DON'T APPEAR TO BE INTELLIGENT IN ANY CONVENTIONAL SENSE OF THE TERM...
...BUT THEY'RE CUNNING. THEY'VE HAD TIME TO FAMILIARIZE THEMSELVES WITH THE PASSAGEWAYS.
IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME...
...BEFORE THEY FIND A WAY...
...TO GET TO US.



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